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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5813
INFO RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1073
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0514
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0636
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 0640
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0743
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 0618
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SHANGHAI 000288

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STATE FOR EAP/CM
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/15/2017
TAGS: PGOV CH TW
SUBJECT: SHANGHAI ACADEMIC ON BEIJING'S TAIWAN POLICY

CLASSIFIED BY: Simon Schuchat, Deputy Principal Officer, ,
U.S. Consulate Shanghai.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) During a discussion with Deputy Principal Officer (DPO) and Poloff on May 15, Shanghai Center for RimPac Strategic and International Studies Vice Director Zhuang Jianzhong said that there had been a slight shift in Beijing's policy towards Taiwan that supported opening unofficial channels of communication with the DPP. For this reason, the government "sort of sent him" to Taiwan in February to meet with DPP officials, including senior officials in the Mainland Affairs Council and Presidential Office. He said that Beijing could not open official channels with the DPP and was, therefore, looking to academics like him to establish relations with DPP officials. While the government did not officially send him to Taiwan, Zhuang reported his conversations to Beijing upon his return. He added that Beijing, as well as other interlocutors, were comfortable with him since he was very discreet and did not speak to the press. He did not provide any details on what he discussed with DPP officials.

¶2. (C) Zhuang said that he was not surprised that Frank Hsieh (Xie Chang-ting) had won the DPP's Presidential candidacy. Hsieh had run a very smart campaign by being quiet. The other candidates, in particular presumed front-runner Su Tseng-chang, were also too closely associated with President Chen Shui-bian. Zhuang believed that this was an indication that there had been a drop in support for President Chen Shui-bian within the DPP. Chen's recent focus on getting Taiwan into the World Health Organization was solely motivated by domestic political concerns, and was nothing more than an attempt to regain power and show that he was not a "lame duck" President.

¶3. (C) Comment: Although, it is unclear whether Beijing initiated Zhuang's travel to Taiwan, it would have been impossible for Zhuang, a former PLA Colonel, to travel to Taiwan and meet with DPP officials without the central government's support. Zhuang has traveled a great deal this year to participate in various conferences, including active "track 2.5" cross-Straits meetings. In addition to traveling to Taiwan in February, he was in Hong Kong during the same month and then the United States in March and South Korea in April. He added that he might lead a delegation to South Korea in the near future.

JARRETT